

REMARKS

At the time of the Office Action of June 4, 2007, claims 1-24 were pending in this application. Applicant acknowledges, with appreciation, the Examiner's allowance of claims 1-3, 8-10, 14-20, 22, and 23. Applicant also acknowledges, with appreciation, the Examiner's indication that claims 6, 7, and 13 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claims 4, 5, 11, 12, 21, and 24 stand rejected.

In this Amendment, claims 5, 7, 15, 17, 21, and 24 have been amended, and claims 4 and 14 canceled. Care has been exercised to avoid the introduction of new matter. Claims 5 and 7 have been amended to be dependent on claim 1, and claims 15 and 17 have been amended to be dependent on claim 11. Claims 21 and 24 have also been amended for better form. Support for the present Amendment should be apparent throughout the written description of the specification.

Claims 1-3, 5-13, and 15-24 are now active in this application, of which claims 1, 8, 11, 14, 18, and 21-24 are independent.

Claims 4, 5, 11, and 12 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Hiratsuka et al.

The Examiner asserted that Hiratsuka et al. discloses a continuous image estimation method identically corresponding to what is claimed. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Applicant first notes that the rejection of claims 4 and 5 has been rendered moot by the cancellation of claim 4 and the amendment of claim 5 to be dependent on claim 1 which is indicated to be allowed.

Applicant second notes that the Examiner did not address claims 11 and 12 in the statement of the rejection. In fact, the Examiner's statement is almost the reproduction of claims 4 and 5. In addition, claims 11 and 12 are device claims reciting similar limitations as those of allowed method claims 1 and 2. Since claims 1 and 2 are indicated to be allowed, claims 11 and 12 are also considered allowed.

Accordingly, Applicant submits that the Examiner has not established a *prima facie* basis to deny patentability to the subject matter recited in claims 11 and 12. Withdrawal of the rejection of the claims is, therefore respectfully solicited.

Claims 21 and 24 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §101.

The Examiner asserted that the claimed invention is directed to non-statutory subject matter. Claims 21 and 24 have been amended to recited "a computer-readable recording medium." Applicant, therefore, respectfully solicits withdrawal of the rejection of the claims and favorable consideration thereof.

Conclusion

It should, therefore, be apparent that the imposed rejections have been overcome and that all pending claims are in condition for immediate allowance. Favorable consideration is, therefore, respectfully solicited.

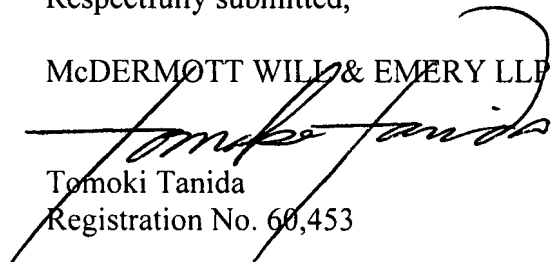
To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper,

Application No.: 10/715,437

including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 500417 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tomoki Tanida", is written over the printed name and registration number.

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